

application. The Applicant thus respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection based on the priority date of the present application.

In particular, the present application claims priority of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/798,276 filed on March 2, 2001, now abandoned, which claimed priority of U.S. Provisional Application Serial Nos. 60/188,932, filed March 9, 2000, and 60/188,670, filed March 11, 2000. The Applicant respectfully submits that the disclosures of the '932 and '670 provisional applications clearly provide support for pending claims 1-19 of the present application.

The present application thus claims priority dates of March 9 and March 11, 2000, which clearly predate September 14, 2000, the date on which U.S. Patent No. 6,681,344 to Andrew was filed. The Andrew reference thus may not properly be considered as prior art under 35 USC § 103(a), and the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC § 103(a) based on the Andrew reference.

Because the sole remaining basis for the final rejection was the combination of the Andrew reference with the Walden et al. reference under 35 USC § 103(a), the Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection has been rendered moot.

Given the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that currently pending claims 1-19 are in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested. If there is any matter which could be expedited by consultation with the Applicant's attorney, such would be welcome. The Applicant's attorney can normally be reached at the telephone number below.

Signed at Bellingham, County of Whatcom, State of Washington this 17th day of March, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING
37 C.F.R. §1.8

I hereby certify that this paper (along with any paper referred to as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop FA, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the date shown below.

Signature: Susie Hubka

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Date: March 17, 2005